



GREENE COUNTY

SHERIFF



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July 13, 2015

Mayor Bob Stephens and members of Springfield City Council:

It has been a very difficult time for law enforcement since April 1, 2015. I understand my actions were not looked upon favorably by our communities, but as the Greene County Sheriff it is my sworn duty that I operate the Greene County Jail safely for our corrections officers as well as the detainees. When I was notified in writing from the Springfield Fire Department after an inspection that there was a fire egress violation, I had to act immediately. The egress violation dropped our occupancy to 254. Fortunately, the Greene County Commission authorized funding the repair and then asked the contractor to compress the work timeline from twelve weeks to four weeks and agreed to pay any premiums over the estimated amount. With the work finished on July 3, 2015, our occupancy is now at 601.

I can now receive and house municipal prisoners at the Greene County Jail when space is available. As I have already explained, RSMo 221.040, RSMo 221.270, and RMSo 221.280 are the statutes that I am bound to and the penalty I incur if I fail in these duties by refusing a state charged or federal charged prisoner. The statute only gives me the option of not accepting municipal charged prisoners as outlined in RSMo 479.180.

Please know that seventy percent of the arrests of State and Federal prisoners are the result of Springfield Police Department initiated cases. Approximately eighty percent of the cases submitted to the Greene County Prosecuting Attorney are made by the Springfield Police Department. Therefore, a very small percentage of all prisoners arrested are municipal court prisoners. As you know, I have always accepted all prisoners arrested by municipal police agencies that violated state crimes as mandated by state statute.

As demonstrated by the wonderful collaboration and cooperation that has benefited our Greene County community for many years, Springfield and Greene County are members of the same family. As with many families there can be disputes, but the best ways to solve them is within the family. The Commission and I believe this is what is best for our community. Litigation will appear in the media and any further collaboration would have to cease and this matter placed in the hands of attorneys. The Commission and I are very sensitive to the fact that litigation could irreversibly harm our economic future to the extent that potential businesses wanting to locate in Springfield/Greene County could be discouraged by the Springfield City Council pursuing a lawsuit. It is our belief that Springfield and Greene County cannot risk this. As the Mayor pointed out in his State of the City address just last week, "... Our city is strong and getting stronger. We are the third-largest city in the state. It's time we took our rightful place in influencing state decisions." This could be damaged if the Springfield City Council decides to file a law suit as was stated by the Mayor last Friday.

After meeting with the municipal police chiefs within Greene County last Wednesday, I began accepting municipal prisoners as of 1:00 p.m. that day. This was initially done on a limited basis based on jail occupancy.

Last Friday morning, (July 10, 2015), The Commission, Chris Coulter and I spent several hours developing a strategy whereby I can receive additional municipal prisoners. I would like to reiterate the plan that I outlined during the press conference last Friday when the Mayor asked if any other law enforcement officers or mayors had additional comments.

I have asked the Greene County Commission to forgo a roof repair that was going to be in my 2016 budget request and authorize use of those funds for the remainder of 2015. This amount of \$150,000 will be applied to house any municipal prisoner at the Henry County Jail only when the Greene County Jail is at full occupancy of 601. Anytime jail occupancy drops below 601 I will be pleased to accept municipal prisoners in the Greene County Jail. Part of my reasoning to use the Henry County Jail is that they have the ability to conduct video appearances. I would not, however, be able to provide transportation. This would be the responsibility of the municipal police departments.

This solution will provide twenty-five beds per day dedicated to municipal prisoners for the remainder of the calendar year which is what was requested by the City of Springfield and the other municipalities. The Greene County Commission is committed to a resolution to this issue which is why we worked together to create this very workable plan. The Commission's investment of an additional \$150,000 in resolving this issue for our community shows how they want to further the effort in protecting the public and protecting our economy.

As with many solutions to complex problems, not everyone will be one hundred percent pleased. However, this plan will resolve the immediate problem as long as we all compromise a little.

Additionally, the Commission recently made a presentation to the Springfield City Council regarding our master plan pertaining to the justice system. We believe the strategy outlined last Friday and in this letter will resolve the short term issues, and we look forward to your support in helping us resolve the long term issues.

As has always been the case, I and the Commission will be pleased to discuss the implementation of this strategy of accepting municipal prisoners any time.

I stated earlier, we are a family and we should resolve it like a family. To paraphrase the Mayors last statement in his speech: "May Springfield - and Greene County - live long and prosper". We concur with him.

Thank you for assisting us in resolving this very complex matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Arnott", written over a horizontal line.

Sheriff Jim C. Arnott